E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the separate circle of the Princes.

E 563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* (15), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

491 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters.

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown.

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle.

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall.